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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF

B. POPE BARTLETT, Esq.

*Medical Officer of Health,*

MERE RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY.

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**PRESENTED 1895.**

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# MERE RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY.

## THE MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

The following is the report of Dr Bartlett, medical officer of the Mere Rural Sanitary Authority :—

*To the Chairman and Members of the Mere District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to lay before you my report as medical officer of health, for the year ending Dec. 31, 1894.

### DEATHS.

During the year 1894, the deaths of 93 persons of all ages and from all causes were registered, against 74 in the previous year, an increase of 19. These show a death-rate of 13·4 per 1,000 of population calculated on the census estimated to the middle of the year 1894.

Of this number 12 or 12·9 per cent (equal to 1·7 per thousand of the population) were of children under one year of age, and 52 or 55·9 per cent. of persons 65 years of age and upwards.

According to the quarters of the year, the deaths were as follows :—

First quarter	...	..	..	28
Second quarter	..	..	..	27
Third quarter	..	...	...	11
Fourth quarter	...	..	...	27
				—
				93

There were 41 deaths of males and 52 of females.

### BIRTHS.

178 births were registered during the year, an increase of 11 on last year. This number is equal to an annual birth-rate of 25·8 per 1,000 population. Excess of births over deaths, 85. Of the births 84 were of males and 94 of females.

### MORTALITY FROM CERTAIN DISEASES.

Of the deaths classified according to these causes, 30 were due to diseases of the chest, viz., 5 to phthisis, 10 to bronchitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy, and 15 to heart disease. The proportionate large number of deaths attributed to the latter disease is worthy of observation. Three deaths were caused by injuries.

### DEATHS FROM ZYMOTIC AND SPECIFIC FEBRILE DISEASES.

Five deaths are ascribed to these diseases, equal to about 5·3 per cent. of the total number of deaths, and to ·72 per 1,000 of population. Of these, three were due to measles, accompanied with chest complications in weakly children, and all occurred in the parish of Maiden Bradley during the latter part of November and the beginning of December. The other two deaths were due to whooping cough in young children, and occurred in Mere during the latter half of December.

### NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES UNDER TABLE B.

During the year 1894 the whole district has been remarkably free from these diseases. The total number notified under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act is only 28, as compared with 126 last year. Of these a large number were due to erysipelas.

*Scarlatina*.—This disease has only appeared in two houses during the year, and in each case the infection was probably introduced from neighbouring districts. In March three cases occurred in a house at Bourton. The disease was of a severe type, but by careful isolation, &c., it was prevented from spreading. In November two cases were reported in an out-lying farm house situate in the parish of Mere, a child having been sent home from a school at Shaftesbury with the complaint. The disease was of a very mild character. In both cases all the children recovered.

*Diphtheria*.—10 cases of diphtheria were reported. These occurred as isolated cases in various parts of the district, there having been no general outbreak in any one part. As this complaint originates chiefly from defective sanitation, its prevalence may be taken as an index of the general sanitary condition of the district. In one case at least, and probably in some others, the disease was contracted outside the district. No deaths were attributed to this complaint.

*Erysipelas*.—13 cases of this disease have been reported, but they have been sporadic in appearance, and none of a serious form.

*Measles.*—Measles were prevalent in Maiden Bradley during the last two months of the year, but as the disease is not included in the Notification Act, the number of cases cannot be given. As a rule, they were of moderate severity and uncomplicated, but three children died, owing to debility and chest complications. The epidemic only lasted about a month.

*Whooping Cough.*—Many children in Mere and East and West Knoyle suffered from this complaint during the last three months of the year. Two infants died of it in Mere during the month of December.

*Influenza.*—From the middle of January to the end of February, influenza was again epidemic in the district. The cases showed the usual symptoms, but fortunately were as a rule uncomplicated, and although severe, made good recoveries. The disease was highly infectious, whole households being seized with it in rapid succession.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT.

This act has been in force in the district during the year, and the results have continued satisfactory. The cases notified have been small in number, but certificates have been promptly sent by the medical men attending them, and by this means I have been able to take early precautions with regard to isolation, &c. The importance of being informed as soon as possible of the appearance of an infectious disease in the district, was well shown in the two outbreaks of scarlatina, which, with prompt attention, were each limited to one household.

#### GENERAL SANITARY CONDITION OF THE DISTRICT.

During the year I have visited all parts of the District, and I consider the general sanitary condition is good. Sanitary defects have been reported and corrected, the chief of which were:—(1), Cesspools connected with privies in a foul and neglected condition. 45 of these have come under the notice of the sanitary inspector, and have been promptly attended to under his supervision. I need scarcely point out the danger of neglecting to clean out these cesspools regularly. Not only does a foul and overflowing cesspool cause danger to health by the nauseous gases given off, but there is always the risk of contamination of water supplies. In a country district where a system of sewerage is impossible these cesspools are an unavoidable danger increased by neglect, and require constant supervision. (2),



Collections of refuse consisting chiefly of pig manure, and decaying vegetable matter. 24 of these have been reported and removed.

Nuisances reported	...	...	72
Nuisances abated	...	...	70
Number of houses inspected	...	...	1,270

#### WATER SUPPLY.

Owing to the continuous rainfall during the past summer, there have been no complaints of a lack of water for domestic purposes. The quality, however, in some cases has been far from satisfactory. I have during the past year examined samples of water from most of the public water supplies in the district as well as water from several private wells, in which the purity was doubtful. With regard to the latter, I cannot insist too strongly on the importance of careful attention to the quality of water obtained from wells, especially the shallow ones, of which there are many in the district. Some samples of water I examined obtained from this class of well were very impure, and quite unfit for domestic use. Last summer the continuous rainfall caused a large quantity of surface water to flow in these wells, carrying with it much impure matter. In those cases mentioned above I ordered the wells to be cleaned out, and by this means the quality of the water was improved.

I give the results of my examination of the public water supplies :—

*Public water supplies in the district.*—Bourton—Source, water-works, very pure and good, soft. Zeals—Source, the fountain, very good, soft. Mere—Source, spring, Ivy-mead, very good, soft. Causeway well, impure, unfit for domestic use unless boiled and filtered, soft. Maiden Bradley—Source, water work, a pure and good water, but rather hard. East Knoyle—Source, Mrs Seymour's tap, very pure and good, soft. Milton tap, very good. West Knoyle—Source "Puckwell," impure, unfit for domestic purposes, soft.

Trusting you will consider this report for the past year satisfactory,

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

B. POPE BARTLETT,

Medical Officer of Health.

The registered births in the several parishes have been as follows :—

		Census, 1891.	Estimated to middle of 1894.	Registered Births.
Bourton	... ..	782	799	14
Silton..	... ..	212	216	4
Kilmington..	... ..	369	377	8
East Knoyle..	... ..	956	983	23
West Knoyle	... ..	158	160	4
Kingston Deverill..	... ..	234	241	9
Monkton Deverill ..	... ..	104	108	3
Maiden Bradley	... ..	606	622	17
Mere ..	... ..	2749	2781	82
Sedgehill	... ..	176	192	6
Stourton	... ..	410	419	8
		<hr/> 6756	<hr/> 6898	<hr/> 178

New cases of sickness in each locality coming to the knowledge of the medical officer of health :—

		Scarla- tina.	Diph- theria.	Erysip- elas.
Bourton	... ..	3	2	1
Silton	... ..	...	...	1
Kilmington	... ..	...	1	1
East Knoyle	... ..	...	...	1
West Knoyle...	... ..	...	...	..
Kingston Deverill	... ..	...	2	1
Monkton Deverill	... ..	...	...	..
Maiden Bradley	... ..	...	3	1
Mere	... ..	2	2	7
Sedgehill	... ..	...	...	...
Stourton	... ..	...	...	...
		<hr/> 5	<hr/> 10	<hr/> 13

Notification of infectious diseases has been compulsory in the district since Jan. 1, 1890.

The table of deaths shows :—

		At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
Bourton	... ..	7	..	...	...	1	...	6
Silton	... ..	3	...	...	...	..	1	2
Kilmington	... ..	6	2	...	...	..	1	3
East Knoyle	... ..	10	1	..	..	1	2	6
West Knoyle	... ..	1	..	...	...	..	1	..
Kingston Deverill	... ..	5	..	...	..	..	2	3
Monkton Deverill	... ..	7	1	3	1	..	..	2
Maiden Bradley	... ..	49	8	...	1	2	12	26
Mere	... ..	..	...	...	...	...	...	..
Sedgehill	... ..	5	..	...	..	...	1	4
Stourton	... ..	<hr/> 93	<hr/> 12	<hr/> 3	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 20	<hr/> 52

The causes of mortality are :—

			Measles	Whooping Cough	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy	Heart Disease	Injuries	All other Diseases	Total
Bourton ... ..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	..	2	7
Silton ... ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	2	3
Kilmington ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	..	3	6
East Knoyle ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	7	10
West Knoyle ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1
Kingston Deverill										
Monkton Deverill	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	..	2	5
Maiden Bradley ...	..	3	..	..	..	1	..	..	3	7
Mere ... ..	..	..	..	2	3	6	7	1	30	49
Sedgehill .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..
Stourton ... ..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	2	5
			—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
			3	2	5	13	15	3	52	93

